

TF2's Slippery Slope



On December 1, 2022, a new means of scripting was introduced in TF2.

VScript is a virtual machine for scripting used in some Source Engine games, that allows developers and mapmakers to write and embed custom scripts that interface with the game world and its entities. VScript was implemented into Team Fortress 2 in the December 1, 2022 Patch and has been used in several maps since.

Basically, VScripts allows for heavy customization of TF2's gameplay elements. To no one's surprise, the community cannot control themselves, and so they are taking it far beyond what it needs to be, because they can, and Valve is dangerously close to letting them.

Just as RTX and cinematic graphics are the "chrome" for remasters, VScripting is the new "chrome" for Team Fortress 2. It's flashy, it's shiny, it's the new thing with an incredible wow factor, and it must be used everywhere and in ludicrous ways... even if that means butchering what TF2 is all about along the way.

It first started when Versus Saxton Hale (VSH) was introduced as an **official** game mode, rather than something you'd only find in a good old fashioned community server. VSH wasn't a *bad* addition, per se. It was actually partially in line with TF2's lore.

But VSH was putting a foot in the ocean of absurdity to see if it was safe.

Next came the submersion of the torso: zombie infection mode. A game mode considered by many to be incredibly flawed, broken, unbalanced... and ridiculous.

(Skip to 3:50)

But it isn't enough for zoomers. It never is. Now we must submerge the head and submerge TF2 completely in an ocean of inane ostentation. There have been talks of trying to port PropHunt as an official gamemode.

Valve is unfortunately on the verge of letting the chrome-infatuation-infection (CII) infect the game. It must be expunged before it tears everything apart like a cancer. The slippery slope is no joke, man.

The beginning of the end... of the end?

Does this really signal the death of TF2, though? Truth is, Valve's been putting nails on this coffin for a while now. In order to keep the game within post-2015-Valve standards, it has had to get the short end of the stick in terms of *"things we need to put into this game because our other most popular games have it"*.

Alright, I know that sounded silly, but bear with me.

Weapon skins. They've been all the rage in CSGO since the beginning. With TF2's booming economy, Valve eventually realized what was missing.

More had to be done to abuse the submissiveness of the TF2 fanbase, so they conjured up the Gun Mettle update and Tough Break update, adding a whole new layer into the game's economy, introducing tons of weapon skins ranging from sensible to *"only an fool who buys flashy RGB gamer products would want this"*.

It's pretty much expected every year now. Valve imports a bunch of eyesore community-made weapons straight from the workshop, all as a half-assed "we still care" effort while further shitting up the game's ridiculously large file size (thanks to hats) and ensuring another handsome paycheck to Valve's multi-billion dollar venture.

Moving on, then Meet Your Match (MYM) came along, which was practically the death of freeform matchmaking and attempted to bridge a gap for the *competitive* crowd... because if there's one thing TF2 was known for... its competitive play.

Various opinions of MYM in retrospect include...

<https://archive.ph/FA4S3>

"The update made to modernize the game and bridge the gap between competitive and casual managed to entirely fuck everyone over on all sides."

<https://web.archive.org/web/20231115031653/https://steamcommunity.com/app/440/discussions/0/1646544348830125576/>

"Because nobody ever met their match, it would put 11 gibuses on one team and 8 or 9 high-levelers on the other. It also really pushed a competitive atmosphere on a casual shooter. It's still that way today, just not as severe as when it first released"

"Got rid of quick play and brought in the garbage that is casual and competitive that killed community servers"

because it removed control over which map/server you'll play on & for how long.
because it forces the server to restart & all players to reconnect at the end of each match, meaning overall less time spent playing & more time spent re/connecting.
because it removed the option to directly connect to your friends.
because it removed the option to play against your friends.
because it took valve servers off of the server browser, leaving the now re-named "community" server browser to shrivel into obscurity.
because its idea of finding equal matches is 1-3 competent people per team being forced to carry the rest.

Because its matchmaking system is still hot garbage even after 3 years.
It took a huge dump on community servers.
As well as questionable balance design choices.

- Too much downtime.

The time spend preparing a match takes too long when comparing it to the time actually playing the match. You have the queue time, which may or may not be long depending on the region you live in, the maps you selected and the time you started the queue at.

You have the time spending connecting to the server.

You have the skirmish time waiting for everyone to join.

As well as the match end time where voting for the next map takes too long for what it's worth. If you have fast queue times, it's faster to just requeue.

If you're put into a game in progress, the downtime/playtime ratio is even smaller.

This wouldn't be all that bad if matches actually lasted longer. But there are only 2/3 rounds that are mostly short due to next point...

- Matches are a carry fest.

Matches are won depending on which team has the least amount of deadweight. This might be fun for the players looking to boost their ego by killing newbies, but even that becomes tiresome after a while. Pre-made lobbies tilt the balance even further down the scale. Official servers have too little of a playerbase to reliably match newbies with newbies and experienced players with experienced players. But even if that was possible, it'd still result in frustration due to...

- Mishmash of different people with different ideals.

People who find matches fun if everyone goes serious mode and go for the objectives are paired with people who find matches fun if they're using whacky loadouts. Resulting in different ideals that clash with each other heavily, frustration on both ends ensues.

- Attitude in Casual has no consequences.

Toxic behaviour in Casual is pretty common due to previous point. Because positive attitude isn't rewarded and negative attitude isn't punished, players can act how they want without any consequences. Mostly resulting in toxic behaviour. Am I saying to ban people that act toxic? No. As I said, being paired with randoms on a random server is mostly the cause of toxic behaviour. Because you'll never be on that server again after leaving, and you'll probable won't ever be paired again with those same people. There's no reason to act nice to those people.

- Servers die too quickly and/or start incompletd.

If the match is over and players are supposed to select the next map, most players leave. Resulting in the next match the server is going towards only being fought by 5v5 or something like that. Matchmaker has an incredible difficult time matching new people into said match, but this is a double-edged sword since most people hate being put into an in progress match.

Autobalance can cause a chain reaction with people leaving in rapid succession, thus resulting in the server quickly dying off. Yet again an incomplete match.

People that like maps that are in the section labeled "alternative game modes" are being punished with long queue times and incomplete matches. I don't think it's right to punish people who just have a different taste in which map selection they prefer.

- Cheaters/bots run rampantly:

Self-explanatory point. Pre-made lobbies can be abused extremely for this purpose.

Mind you, this desecration was done to cater to the competitive crowd, as small and insignificant as it was. It was also around the time Overwatch released, so when all was said and done, the competitive elites who ushered in this horrible update immediately jumped ship to play Overwatch. Never forget.

In conclusion...

The quality of updates has been on a steady downhill spiral since 2014.

The latest (and apparently last) decent “major” update (Jungle Inferno back in 2017, given everything else since then has mostly been subpar community contributions) was pretty much what on-par with you’d expect from the major updates that were happening **trimonthly** back in 2008 to 2014.

Nowadays, Valve is obviously more focused on other important things. I mean, what else are they supposed to do with such a talented and iconic voice acting crew, a colorful lore, and an unrelenting community?

Why, let it wither go to waste, of course! After all, this is Valve we’re talking about. They had the keys to the greatest story ever told in gaming, and they threw even that away.

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"It's strange to think that, but the fact that TF2 got abandoned by Valve meant that we never saw it devolve into having a Battle Royale mode. Silver lining, something-something."